

"Echo and Crosstalk Cancellation"

INTRODUCTION

5 Field of the Invention

The invention relates to cancellation of echo and crosstalk in high-speed networks such as 1 Gb/s networks.

10 Prior Art Discussion

Taking the example of 1 Gb/s networks, there are typically four cable pair channels, say A, B, C, and D. Each pair is used for both transmit and receive. Due to mismatches in the cable impedance there is an echo returned to the receiver. These mismatches may occur at junctions and patch cords. In addition, the transceiver hybrid only partially attenuates the locally transmitted signal. This combination is known as the echo signal and it appears as a noise source to the receiver.

20 Because there are four pairs of unshielded cable there is the additional problem of crosstalk. The other three transmitters (at the same end as the receiver) all generate interference signals known as near-end crosstalk (NEXT). Furthermore, the three transmitters at the far end generate interference signals known as far-end crosstalk (FEXT). In summary, each receiver has to cope with interference signals from seven other transmitters, namely one echo from the transmitter on the same pair, three NEXT from the transmitters on the same end and three FEXT from the three transmitters at the far end.

Heretofore, the approach to deal with these interference signals has been to generate a replica signal to the noise source and to subtract it from the received signal. This is possible because the four near transmit signals are known, and the three far transmit signals can be deduced. The corresponding
5 noise signal due to any given transmit signal can be approximated at the receiver using the transmit signal as the starting point. This is usually done using an adaptive finite impulse response filter ("adaptive FIR filter" or "AFIR"), one for each of the noise sources, and the input to each AFIR is the corresponding transmit signal. The coefficients of each AFIR are adapted to
10 minimise the difference (MSE - mean square error) between the received signal plus the total noise signal less the output of the AFIR (which is an approximation to the noise signal corresponding to that transmit signal).

The AFIR filter that cancels the echo is known as an "echo canceller", and
15 likewise there are NEXT cancellers and FEXT cancellers. Thus, for a complete Gigabit transceiver, a total of four echo cancellers, twelve NEXT cancellers and twelve FEXT cancellers are required to cancel all of the noise sources.

A problem with the above approach is that it is a very large and complex
20 system and is expensive in terms of computational complexity, silicon area, and power consumption. At a 125 M symbols per second rate the span of the echo cancellers (i.e. number of taps) is very large, at a 125 MHz sample rate an individual multiplier and adder is required for each tap. In addition a coefficient adaptation circuit is required for each tap. Likewise the span of the
25 NEXT and FEXT cancellers is also very large.

It is known that though the span of an echo canceller required to cancel echo for a given system may need to be very large it is usual that not all of the taps are necessary. The difficulty lies in identifying which taps are necessary and
30 which are not as this will vary from cable to cable and indeed may vary from

time to time. This is known to also be a problem in acoustic echo cancellers. A method of tackling this problem has been proposed in WO99/46867 (Broadcom, Gigabit Ethernet Transceiver), in which after the echo canceller has been trained a certain number of taps are switched off. A method is described to
5 determine which taps are important and which are not making a significant contribution to noise reduction. This method has the advantage of reducing the power dissipation of the circuit, though no reduction in area is achieved (in fact area appears to be increased).

10 The invention is directed towards providing improved echo and crosstalk cancellation.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

15 According to the invention, there is provided a cancellation system for echo or crosstalk noise in a communication transceiver for a plurality of channels, the system comprising a channel circuit comprising taps for each channel and means for training the taps by setting coefficient values, characterised in that:-

20 at least some of the channel circuits each comprise insufficient taps for a full span;

each of said channel circuits further comprises a variable delay line connected in series with the taps; and

25 the training means comprises means for setting length of each variable delay line so that positions of the taps are optimised.

In one embodiment, the training means comprises means for sharing taps from another channel circuit when training each channel circuit in order to achieve a full span for each channel during training.

- 5 In another embodiment, each channel circuit comprises a plurality of variable delay lines separated by taps.

In a further embodiment, the taps are arranged in at least one block having a fixed number of taps.

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In one embodiment, the training means comprises means for determining an optimum position for each tap block to set the length of the variable delay line.

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In another embodiment, the training means comprises means for determining a coefficient sum for each of a plurality of candidate windows, and choosing the window providing the maximum coefficient sum.

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In a further embodiment, the training means comprises means for determining an optimum position for each block subject to pre-set constraints.

In one embodiment, a constraint is a maximum length for the variable delay line.

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In another embodiment, a constraint is that tap blocks do not overlap.

In one embodiment, each channel circuit comprises, in series: a near variable delay line, a near tap block, a far variable delay line, and a far tap block.

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In another embodiment, each variable delay line comprises cascaded register blocks linked by multiplexers comprising means for bypassing a register block

or feeding data through it according to training control signals setting a delay length.

In one embodiment, the training means comprises an adaptation module for at
5 least one tap block.

In another embodiment, at least some adaptation modules comprise means for training two or more tap blocks.

10 According to another aspect, the invention provides a cancellation system for echo or crosstalk noise in a communication transceiver for a plurality of channels, the system comprising a channel circuit comprising taps for each channel and means for training the taps by setting coefficient values, characterised in that:-

15 at least some of the channel circuits each comprise insufficient taps for a full span;

each of said channel circuits further comprises a variable delay line
20 connected in series with the taps;

the training means comprises means for sharing taps from another channel circuit when training each channel circuit in order to achieve a full span for each channel during training; and

25 the training means comprises means for determining an optimum position for each tap block to set the length of the variable delay line, said means comprising means for determining a coefficient sum for each of a plurality of candidate windows, and choosing the window providing
30 the maximum coefficient sum.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Brief Description of the Drawings

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The invention will be more clearly understood from the following description of some embodiments thereof, given by way of example only with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:-

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Fig. 1 is a diagram illustrating sources of noise to be cancelled;

Fig. 2 is a block diagram of an echo canceller of a cancellation system;

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Fig. 3 is a diagram showing interconnection of parts of the echo canceller during training;

Fig. 4 is a diagrammatic representation showing setting of variable delay line lengths; and

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Fig. 5 is a diagram illustrating a variable delay line in detail.

Description of the Embodiments

Referring to Fig. 1 a Gigabit system 1 comprises four cable pair channels A, B, C, and D and a transceiver 2 at each end. Each transceiver 2, at a high level, comprises a transmitter T, a receiver R, and a hybrid 3 physically connected to each cable A, B, C, and D. The echo and crosstalk sources for the left side transceiver 2 for cable pair A are illustrated by arrows. There are three FEXT interferences FEXT_BA, FEXT_CA, and FEXT_DA, three NEXT interferences NEXT_BA, NEXT_CA, and NEXT_DA, and finally, there is an echo in the

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receiver R from the associated transmitter T and from points of impedance mis-match along the cable.

The invention provides an echo and NEXT cancellation system for each transceiver 2. Each cancellation system comprises an echo canceller for
5 dealing with echo in all of the four cable pairs, and a NEXT canceller for dealing with the twelve sources of NEXT. The echo canceller is illustrated, the structure and principles of operation for the NEXT canceller being similar.

10 Referring to Fig. 2 an echo canceller 10 is illustrated. It comprises a cancellation circuit 11 for each of the four cable pair channels A, B, C, and D. Each channel circuit 11 comprises, referring to the first circuit 11a:-

a near variable delay line, n_vdl_a,

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a near block of 40 canceller taps, n_echo_a,

a far variable delay line, f_vdl_a, and

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a far block of 40 canceller taps, f_echo_a.

The letter "a" is substituted by "b", "c", and "d" for the second, third and fourth circuits 11 respectively.

25 Each circuit 11 also comprises a multiplexer "mux" before each variable delay line to allow interconnection of the circuits 11 for training purposes.

The NEXT canceller of the cancellation system comprises twelve circuits equivalent to the circuits 11.

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Within each of the tap blocks `n_echo_a` and `f_echo_a` there is a fixed block of forty taps. The term “tap” in this context means a canceller comprising a register for data, a register for a coefficient, and a multiplier for multiplying the data and the coefficient. Each block of taps also comprises a summing unit
5 for summing 40 multiplier products. The summing unit is also referred to as a sum-of-product (SOP) block.

However, each variable delay line comprises only 40 registers and thus requires much less silicon than a block of 40 taps.

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The echo canceller 10 is for situations in which a span of 160 taps is conventionally required for each channel. However, as described above there is only a total of 80 taps plus two variable delay lines for each channel. The canceller 10 achieves a performance close to or matching that of a canceller
15 having 160 taps for each channel because of the manner in which it is trained, as described below.

During training, the adaptation engine adapts the 160 coefficients to generate a replica noise signal. A full span of 160 taps is possible because the taps from
20 two circuits 11 are shared during training to achieve the full span. Referring to Fig. 3, the output from `f_echo_a` is routed to `n_echo_c` via `n-vdl_c`. Thus the training circuit for each echo source comprises four sets of 40 taps, and four variable delay lines all set to zero delay during training. Thus, during training a combination of two circuits 11 simulates a conventional circuit having 160
25 taps. The coefficient value at each tap is then processed as follows, with reference to Fig. 4:-

A window of positions 0 – 39 is analysed by summing the coefficients, and this is repeated for positions 1 – 40 and so on until positions 40 – 79.
30 There are 40 coefficient sums, one for each of these windows.

The window having the highest value is chosen for the near block of taps, in this example window 3 – 42. The value for the near variable delay line is set by the start position of the near tap block window, in this example 3.

A window of 40 positions starting at tap 43 (43 – 82) is then analysed by summing the values for all positions. Then the summed value for positions 45-84 is determined, and so on for each successive window of 40 positions. The window having the highest value is determined to be the most effective position for the far block of 40 taps and the gap between it and the near set is by default the length of the far variable delay line.

15 The purpose of the tap selection process is to select the optimum position of the two tap blocks under the following constraints.

- The delay between the data stream and the input to the first delay line is in the range 0 to 8 (to adjust possible phase differences among channels).
- 20 • The delay between the delay line output of the first tap block and the delay line input of the second block is in the range 0 to 40 for a NEXT canceller and 0 to 80 for an echo canceller.
- The position of a tap block is considered optimum if the sum of the absolute value of its coefficients is maximum for all possible positions of the block
- 25 SOP.
- The position of the near block is chosen first. The position of the far block is relative to the selected position of the near block.
- The tap blocks cannot overlap.

The tap selection process is called for each channel separately. The taps for the different SOP blocks are selected in the following sequence.

- near echo canceller SOP
- 5 • far echo canceller SOP
- near next canceller SOP for 'first' next canceller
- far next canceller SOP for 'first' next canceller
- near next canceller SOP for 'second' next canceller
- far next canceller SOP for 'second' next canceller
- 10 • near next canceller SOP for 'third' next canceller
- far next canceller SOP for 'third' next canceller

The procedure for selecting the position is the same for any SOP. The sum of the absolute value of the coefficients for the first possible position of the SOP

15 is determined. The sum of the absolute value of the coefficients for the next possible position is then determined by subtracting the absolute value of first coefficient in the sum and adding the absolute value of the next coefficient. If this value is greater than the previous one then the current position is optimum. This process is repeated until all possible positions for the canceller

20 have been considered.

Two signals `recfg_ctr_active` and `coef_en` are required by all adaptation engines to allow the hardware to be reconfigured to facilitate resource sharing. They are used to control resetting the tap coefficients and switching between

25 adaptation of two filters sharing the same adaptation engine.

During the adaptation period at the very beginning the canceller sharing procedure is as follows.

- 30 • Channel A borrows cancellers from channel C.

- Channel B borrows cancellers from channel D.
- Channel C uses channel B and D's cancellers.
- Channel D borrows cancellers from channel B.

- 5 The purpose of the first adaptation stage is to determine the optimum position of the tap (canceller) coefficients within certain constraints. Effectively each canceller has two sum of product (SOP) blocks of equal size. The first block can be placed on the canceller delay line at delays of 0 to 8 clock cycles. The second can be placed on the delay line after the first with delays of 0 to 80
- 10 clock cycles for echo cancellers and 0 to 40 clock cycles for NEXT cancellers. During this first stage of adaptation cancellers are borrowed from other channels so that the whole delay line can be spanned. A decision is then made as to where the tap blocks should be placed for the next stage of adaptation.
- 15 In the second stage of adaptation the coefficients of the taps continue to be adapted to track changes in the channel.

The canceller variable delay lines on reset are configured with delays of zero. The tap adaptation engine determines appropriate delays for these delay lines.

20 However these calculated values may be overwritten by values written via a management interface.

Regarding the NEXT canceller circuits, as described above there are twelve channel circuits each similar in architecture to the echo channel circuits 11.

- 25 The NEXT cancellers are grouped in the following manner.

Group 1

Next canceller for channel A due to transmission on channel B.

Next canceller for channel B due to transmission on channel A.

- 30 Next canceller for channel C due to transmission on channel A.

Next canceller for channel D due to transmission on channel A.

Group 2

Next canceller for channel A due to transmission on channel C.

- 5 Next canceller for channel B due to transmission on channel C.

Next canceller for channel C due to transmission on channel B.

Next canceller for channel D due to transmission on channel B.

Group 3

- 10 Next canceller for channel A due to transmission on channel D.

Next canceller for channel B due to transmission on channel D.

Next canceller for channel C due to transmission on channel D.

Next canceller for channel D due to transmission on channel C.

- 15 By grouping canceller taps in this manner adaptation resources can be easily shared during training.

Referring to Fig. 5, a variable delay line is illustrated. There is a total of 40 registers in four blocks of 8, one block of 4 and four blocks of 1. Control
20 signals `del_sel` are used to set multiplexers `mux_0` to `mux_7` to either bypass a particular register block or feed the data through it to achieve the required delay.

- An adaptation module can be dedicated to each block of taps or shared between
25 blocks. For example, there may be a shared adaptation module for two blocks of taps, namely one for `n_echo_a/n_echo_b`, one for `f_echo_a/f_echo_b`, one for `n_echo_c/n_echo_d`, and one for `f_echo_c/f_echo_d`.

- The invention is not limited to the embodiments described but may be varied
30 in construction and detail.